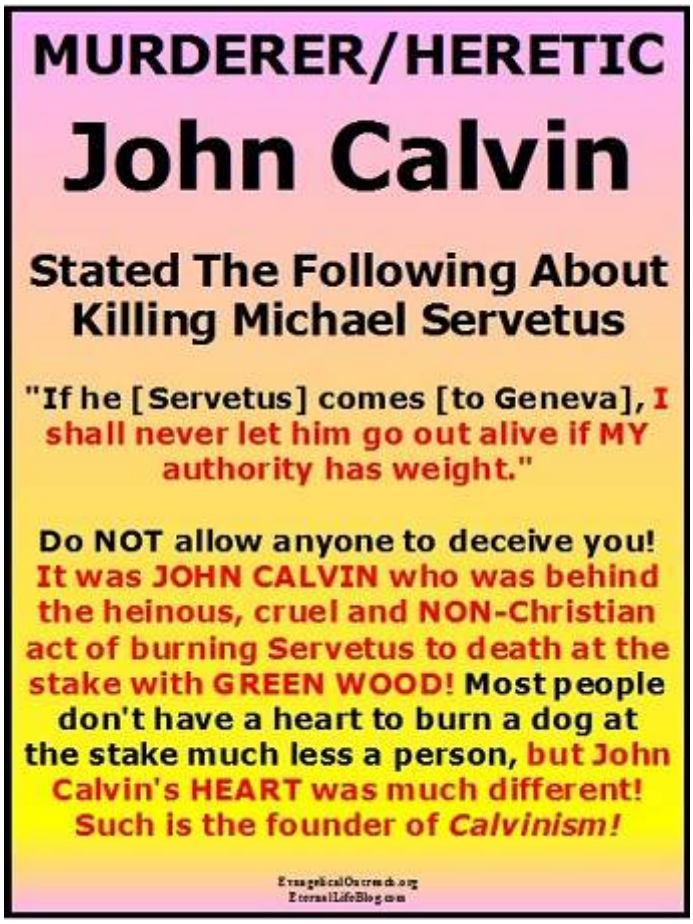
MURDERER John Calvin Burned Michael Servetus At The Stake

The John Calvin and Michael Servetus Debacle

Have you ever heard of *Michael Servetus?* If you are like most, you have not. Why? Because of the Michael Servetus cover-up! Let me change that and reveal an important part of church history from the Reformation period that has been so concealed in our day that very few people know the facts. Brace yourself for a shock.

On October 27, 1553 John Calvin, the founder of Calvinism, had Michael Servetus, the Spanish physician, burned at the stake just outside of Geneva for his doctrinal beliefs! Hence, the originator of the popular doctrine of "**once saved always saved**" (known in certain circles as "**perseverance of the saints**") violated the cry of the Reformation -- "Sola Scriptura" -- by murdering a doctrinal heretic without Scriptural justification.


MURDERER/HERETIC
John Calvin
Stated The Following About Killing Michael Servetus
"If he [Servetus] comes [to Geneva], I shall never let him go out alive if MY authority has weight."
Do NOT allow anyone to deceive you! It was JOHN CALVIN who was behind the heinous, cruel and NON-Christian act of burning Servetus to death at the stake with GREEN WOOD! Most people don't have a heart to burn a dog at the stake much less a person, but John Calvin's HEART was much different! Such is the founder of Calvinism!

This event was something John Calvin had considered long before Michael Servetus was even captured, for John Calvin wrote his friend, Farel, on February 13, 1546 **(seven years prior to Michael Servetus' arrest)** and went on record as saying:

> "**If he** [Servetus] **comes** [to Geneva], **I shall never let him go out alive if my authority has weight**."

Evidently, in that day John Calvin's authority in Geneva, Switzerland had ultimate "weight." This is why some referred to Geneva as the "Rome of Protestantism" and to John Calvin as the "Protestant 'Pope' of Geneva."

During Servetus' trial, John Calvin wrote:

> "I hope that the verdict will call for **the death penalty**."

All this reveals a side of John Calvin that is not well-known or very appealing, to say the least! Obviously, he had a prolonged, murderous hate in his heart and was willing to violate Scripture to put another to death and in a most cruel way. Although John Calvin consented to Michael Servetus' request to be beheaded, he acquiesced to the mode of execution employed. But why did John Calvin have a

death wish for Michael Servetus?

> "To rescue Servetus from his heresies, Calvin replied with the latest edition of his 'Institutes of the Christian Religion,' which Servetus promptly returned with insulting marginal comments. Despite Servetus's [sic] pleas, Calvin, who developed an intense dislike of Servetus during their correspondence, refused to return any of the incriminating material."
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> "Convicted of heresy by the Roman Catholic authorities, Servetus escaped the death penalty by a prison break. Heading for Italy, Servetus unaccountably stopped at Geneva, where he had been denounced by Calvin and the Reformers. He was seized the day after his arrival, condemned as a heretic when he refused to recant, and **burned in 1553 with the apparent tacit approval of Calvin**."
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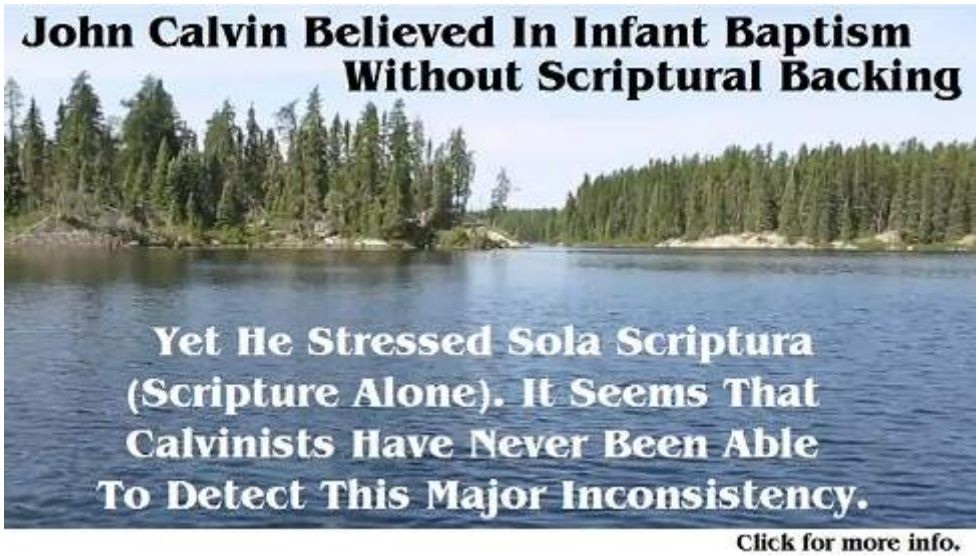
> In the course of his flight from Vienne, Servetus stopped in Geneva and made the mistake of attending a sermon by Calvin. He was recognized and arrested after the service.
>
> "**Calvin had him** [Servetus] **arrested as a heretic. Convicted and burned to death**."

From the time that John Calvin had him arrested on August 14th until his condemnation, Michael Servetus spent his remaining days:

> " ... in an atrocious dungeon with **no light or heat, little food, and no sanitary facilities**."

Let it be noted that the Calvinists of Geneva put half-green wood around the feet of Michael Servetus and a wreath strewn with sulfur on his head. It took over thirty minutes to render him lifeless in such a fire, while the people of Geneva stood around to watch Michael Servetus suffer and slowly die! Just before this happened, the record shows:

> "Farel walked beside the condemned man, and kept up a constant barrage of words, in complete insensitivity to what Servetus might be feeling. All he had in mind was to extort from the prisoner an acknowledgement [sic] of his theological error -- a shocking example of the soulless cure of souls. After some minutes of this, Servetus ceased making any reply and prayed quietly to himself. When they arrived at the place of execution, Farel announced to the watching crowd: 'Here you see what power Satan possesses when he has a man in his power. This man is a scholar of distinction, and he perhaps believed he was acting rightly. But now Satan possesses him completely, as he might possess you, should you fall into his traps.'


John Calvin Believed In Infant Baptism
Without Scriptural Backing
Yet He Stressed Sola Scriptura
(Scripture Alone). It Seems That
Calvinists Have Never Been Able
To Detect This Major Inconsistency.
Click for more info.

> When the executioner began his work, Servetus whispered with trembling voice: 'Oh God, Oh God!' The thwarted Farel snapped at him: 'Have you nothing else to say?' This time Servetus replied to him: 'What else might I do, but speak of God!' Thereupon he was lifted onto the pyre and chained to the stake. A wreath strewn with sulfur was placed on his head. When the faggots were ignited, a piercing cry of horror broke from him. '**Mercy**, mercy!' he cried. **For more than half an hour the horrible agony continued, for the pyre had been made of half-green wood, which burned slowly.** 'Jesus, Son of the eternal God, have

> mercy on me,' the tormented man cried from the midst of the flames ...."

Although we essentially have the same in the conversion of the repentant thief (Lk. 23:42,43 cf. Lk. 18:13) and the Scripture, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Acts 2:21; Rom. 10:13), Farel still reckoned Michael Servetus an unsaved man at the end of his life:

> "Farel noted that Servetus might have been saved by shifting the position of the adjective and confessing Christ as the Eternal Son rather than as the Son of the Eternal God."

> "**Calvin had thus murdered his enemy, and there is nothing to suggest that he ever repented his crime** [sic]. The next year he published a defence [sic] in which further insults were heaped upon his former adversary in most vindictive and intemperate language."

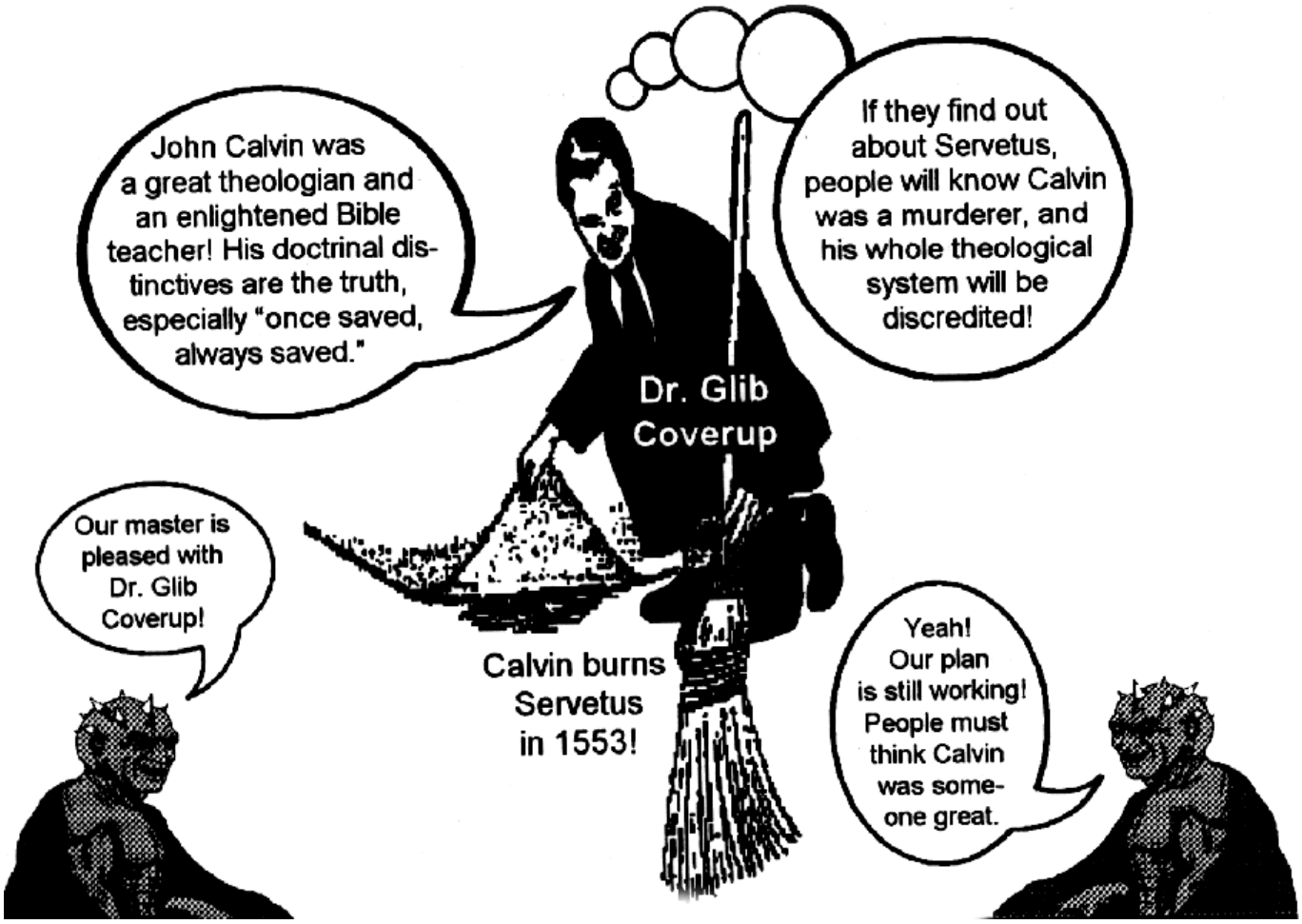
As the Roman Catholics of 1415 burned John Hus at the stake over doctrine, John Calvin, likewise, had Michael Servetus burned at the stake. But was doctrine the only issue? Could there have been another reason, a political one?

> "As an 'obstinate heretic' he had all his property confiscated without more ado. He was badly treated in prison. It is understandable, therefore, that Servetus was rude and insulting at his confrontation with Calvin. Unfortunately for him, at this time Calvin was fighting to maintain his weakening power in Geneva. Calvin's opponents used Servetus as a pretext for attacking the Geneva Reformer's theocratic government. **It became a matter of prestige -- always the sore point for any dictatorial regime -- for Calvin to assert his power in this respect. He was forced to push the condemnation of Servetus with all the means at his command**."

> "Ironically enough, the execution of Servetus did not really bolster the strength of the Geneva Reformation. On the contrary, as Fritz Barth has indicated, it 'gravely compromised Calvinism and put into the hands of the Catholics, to whom Calvin wanted to demonstrate his Christian

orthodoxy, the very best weapon for the persecution of the Huguenots, who were nothing but heretics in their eyes.' The procedure against Servetus served as a model of a Protestant heretic trial .... **it differed in no respect from the methods of the medieval Inquisition .... The victorious Reformation, too, was unable to resist the temptations of power**."

John Calvin Could NOT Have Been A *Great Theologian*


John Calvin was a great theologian and an enlightened Bible teacher! His doctrinal distinctives are the truth, especially "once saved, always saved."
If they find out about Servetus, people will know Calvin was a murderer, and his whole theological system will be discredited!
Dr. Glib Coverup
Our master is pleased with Dr. Glib Coverup!
Calvin burns Servetus in 1553!
Yeah! Our plan is still working! People must think Calvin was someone great.

Is it possible for a man such as John Calvin to have been a "great theologian" and at the same time to act in this reprehensible way and afterwards show no remorse? Dear reader, do you have a heart that could, like John Calvin, burn another person at the stake?

Let us illustrate this another way. Suppose a man from your congregation with a reputation for being a spiritual leader captured your neighbor's dog, chained it to a stake, then used a small amount of green kindling to slowly burn the dog to death.

What would you think of such a person, especially if he afterwards showed no remorse? **Would you want him to interpret the Bible for you?** To make the matter even worse for John Calvin, a person, unlike a dog, is created in the image of God! Like it or not, we can only conclude from this evidence that John Calvin's heart was darkened, and not enlightened, as a result of his murderous hate for Michael Servetus. John Calvin was spiritually blinded by this hate and therefore, spiritually hindered from rightly dividing the word of truth. John Calvin himself was unsaved, according to Scripture:

> "But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, **the murderers**, the sexually immoral, those who practice **magic arts**, the idolaters and all liars -- **their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur**. This is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).
>
> "We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, 'I know him,' but does not do what he commands is a liar and **the truth is not in him**" (1 Jn. 2:3,4).
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> "And **you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding [continuing] in him**" (1 Jn. 3:15, NKJV).

The Greek adds an important word to 1 Jn. 3:15 that is sometimes omitted in English translations. That word is "continuing" or "abiding" (NKJV) and states that murderous people don't have **eternal life** continuing in them.

Dear reader, since murderers are unsaved and John Calvin was a murderer, then John Calvin was unsaved! Moreover, since the unsaved are darkened in their spiritual understanding (Eph. 4:18) and John Calvin was unsaved based on Scripture, then John Calvin was darkened in his spiritual understanding.

Jesus said we can "know" people by their fruit (Mt. 12:33) -- be it John Calvin or anyone else! Similarly, the Apostle John wrote:

> "This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the **devil** are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother" (1 Jn. 3:10).

Can you say John Calvin did what was "right" regarding Michael Servetus? Doesn't this make him a "child of the devil," according to that verse and others already cited? Though some will rant and rave over this conclusion, **can we Scripturally come to any other?**

No other evidence is needed to objectively assess John Calvin's spiritual status. However, two other men should also be briefly mentioned:

> "Two other famous episodes concerned Jacques Gruet and Jerome Bolsec. Gruet, whom Calvin considered a Libertine, had written letters critical of the Consistory and, more serious, petitioned the Catholic king of France to intervene in the political and religious affairs of Geneva. With Calvin's concurrence he was beheaded for treason. Bolsec publicly challenged Calvin's teaching on predestination, a doctrine Bolsec, with many others, found morally repugnant. Banished from the city in 1551, he revenged himself in 1577 by publishing a biography of Calvin that charged him with greed, financial misconduct, and sexual aberration."

How Should A Heretic Be Dealt With?

How should a heretic or any **false teacher** (including Servetus) be dealt with, that is, if one is willing to abide by the Biblical guidelines? Paul wrote Titus and touched upon this very issue, which first starts out as a qualification for eldership in the church:

> "He [the elder] must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and **refute those who oppose it**. For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. **They must be silenced**, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach -- and that for the sake of dishonest gain" (Titus 1:9-11).

Clearly, then, a false teacher should be "silenced," not by having him killed, as Calvinism's founder did, but by refuting him with Scripture. This is the true Christian method.

If John Calvin's example is the standard, the next time the Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormon missionaries come to our door, we should physically overpower them, bind them to a stake, and make human candles out of them. Can you imagine a professing Christian doing this, much less a reputed theologian? If done, could you force yourself to believe such a person was truly saved and adhere to his unique, doctrinal distinctives?

Also, false teachers should be openly named as Paul openly named

Hymenaeus and Philetus who were destroying the faith of some of the Christians whom Paul knew:

> "Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are **Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth**. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and **they destroy the faith of some**" (2 Tim. 2:17,18).

This is also an important preventative against a false teacher's spiritual poison.

Why did John Calvin grossly violate these Scriptural guidelines? Since Paul's Holy Spirit inspired directives (and example) regarding how to deal with a heretic were diametrically opposed by John Calvin, isn't it safe to assume that John Calvin was governed by a different spirit than Paul had? Moreover, why have these facts about John Calvin's life rarely been mentioned in our day? The answer to this last question is obvious. They are both an embarrassment and refutation to the Calvinists who proudly refer to themselves by his name! Since they are the evangelical majority and it is their power and influence that has the greatest sway over what is disseminated throughout our land and even the world, this information about their founder is seldom, if ever, heard. Many people are only now learning the shocking facts about Calvinism's founder as they read them for the first time!

> **"No event has more influenced history's judgment of Calvin than the role he played in the capture and execution of the Spanish physician and amateur theologian Michael Servetus in 1553. This event has overshadowed everything else Calvin accomplished and continues to embarrass his modern admirers."**

Penetrating Questions Regarding Michael Servetus

Three important questions remain: **(1) Can John Calvin be Scripturally justified for murdering Michael Servetus? (2) Does a murderous hate, according to Scripture, render one spiritually unable to accurately interpret the Scriptures? (3) Can a murderer be saved according to Rev. 21:8?**

All these answers have a bearing on the credibility of John Calvin's popular "perseverance of the saints" doctrine, among others. Regretfully, Calvin's version

of Christianity is the prevalent view in our land, but is his view Scriptural? To answer in the affirmative is to say that John Calvin's double predestination is true, that is, **some are predestined for Heaven and others are predestined for Hell without free choice on their part!** This would violate many Scriptures, especially 2 Pet. 3:9:

> "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. **He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance**."

Furthermore, **John Calvin's teachings declare Jesus' work on the cross was NOT infinite**, because according to that teaching, He did not shed His blood for every human, but only for the elect -- those predestined to be saved. This is clearly refuted by 1 Jn. 2:2:

> "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and **not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world**."

Also, his "perseverance of the saints" doctrine would assert that God's power will keep a truly saved person secure, in spite of grievous sins committed after regeneration and/or any doctrinal heresies that would be embraced, **thus violating many Scriptural examples and warnings which prove the opposite!**

It should be apparent that, from the founder down to us today, the "perseverance of the saints" doctrine (most commonly known as "once saved always saved") has most often been a "license for immorality" taught under the banner of grace. See Jude 3,4. **As John Calvin's own theology allowed for his actions against Servetus, many in our day are sexually immoral, liars, drunkards, filled with greed, etc., while they profess salvation. This is a ramification of John Calvin's perverted grace message -- a teaching which has "spread like gangrene" from a man who could openly burn another to death and for the remaining 10 years and seven months of his life, never publicly repent of his crime.**

> **"Servetus' ashes will cry out against him as long as the names of these two men are known in the world."**

End Notes on Michael Servetus

1. "On only two counts, significantly, was Servetus condemned -- namely, anti-Trinitarianism and anti-paedobaptism." Roland H. Bainton, *Hunted Heretic* (The Beacon Press, 1953), p. 207. [Comment: While Servetus was wrong about the **Trinity**, regarding his rejection of **infant baptism**, Servetus said, "It is an invention of the devil, an infernal falsity for the destruction of all Christianity" (Ibid., p. 186.) Many Christians of our day could only give a hearty "Amen" to this statement made about infant baptism. However, this is why, in part, Servetus was condemned to death by the Calvinists!]
2. *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Baker Book House, 1950), p. 371.
3. *The Wycliffe Biographical Dictionary Of The Church* (Moody Press, 1982), p. 73.
4. Stephen Hole Fritchman, *Men Of Liberty* (Reissued, Kennikat Press, Inc., 1968), p. 8.
5. Walter Nigg, *The Heretics* (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1962), p. 328.
6. Steven Ozment, *The Age Of Reformation 1250-1550* (New Haven and London Yale University Press, 1980), p. 370.
7. *Who's Who In Church History* (Fleming H. Revell Company, 1969), p. 252.
8. *The Heretics*, p. 326.
9. *The Wycliffe Biographical Dictionary Of The Church*, p. 366.
10. John F. Fulton, *Michael Servetus Humanist and Martyr* (Herbert Reichner, 1953), p. 35.
11. *The Heretics*, p. 327.
12. *Hunted Heretic*, p. 214. [Comment: Nowhere in the Bible do we see this sort of emphasis for one's salvation. The dying thief, the Philippian jailer and **Cornelius** were all saved by a most basic trusting-submitting faith in Jesus.]
13. *Michael Servetus Humanist and Martyr*, p. 36.
14. John Hus attacked various Roman Catholic heresies such as **transubstantiation**, subservience to the Pope, belief in the saints, efficacy of absolution through the priesthood, unconditional obedience to earthly rulers and simony. Hus also made the Holy Scriptures the only rule in matters of religion and faith. See *The Wycliffe Biographical Dictionary Of The Church*, p. 201.
15. *The Heretics*, p. 326.
16. Ibid., pp. 328, 329.
17. For example, in clear contrast to the meaning that Jesus gave of the **parable of the weeds in the field** (Mt. 13:24-43) where the Lord told us "the field is the world" (v.38), John Calvin taught "the field is the church." See Calvin's verse by

verse commentary of Matthew's gospel.
18. *The Age of Reformation 1250-1550*, pp. 368,369. Bolsec's book in which he charges Calvin as he did is cited as *Histoire de la vie, moeurs, actes, doctrine, constance et mort de Jean Calvin ... pub. a Lyon en 1577, ed. M. Louis-Francois Chastel* (Lyon, 1875).
19. Ibid., p. 369.
20. **Augustine of Hippo**, the Catholic theologian, was an earlier proponent of predestination from whom John Calvin drew ideas.
21. *The Heretics*, p. 328.

Now you know more than many religious people do about John Calvin and his ungodly treatment of Michael Servetus.

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